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if expressly for comfort—unless we should insist on seats all cushions and upholstery, where we sink into a cloud of down; but, for healthful rest to a healthful body, commend me to the easy curves of rococo furniture. Beside her sofas and arm-chairs, Nydia rejoices in the possession of a cabinet—a beautiful piece of true Vernis Martin in green and gold, with panels painted in landscapes à la Watteau, and this gives the accent to the room that perhaps my description will have made it seem to need. But the rug, the hangings at the window, the door-curtains, and the furniture coverings, with the cushions of the sofa—no two alike—all delicate in tone, give warmth and glow, and even on a dull day make the room as softly bright as if Nydia had a recipe for bottled sunshine. I ought not to forget the piano, in which Nydia performed a service to her kind little appreciated, I am sorry to say—that is, if appreciation is to be measured by the number of those who follow the example. Nydia's instrument is only a cottage piano, just such an one as is sold every day in the shops, the only point insisted on in selecting it being that it should be as plain as they make them. The whole woodwork was then given by the decorator a ground of gold, very slightly burnished on the mouldings, and the panels at the sides were decorated with flowers, while the usual open-work above the key-board was filled in with a panel of silk embroidered with light garlands. Here was a plain answer to the oft-heard question, "How to make a piano tolerable to look at," for Nydia's was more than tolerable, it was so pretty to look at that one would not have believed the common wild piano, indigenous to the ordinary drawing-room desert, could have been so transformed by cultivation.

CLARENCE COOK.

THE TYPICAL AMERICAN HOUSE.

SOME weeks ago, two or three artists and writers were discussing the typical American country house. It was complained that there is not, and cannot be, anything that can fairly be regarded as an American type of house-building. The summer houses of our people, if they have any character at all, are Queen Anne, Moresque, Elizabethan, Italian villa, or what not. No man has courage enough to build a simple dwelling that shall meet the requirements of a house used only for a few weeks of summer, and which shall yet have a distinctive and individual character. "But there is the log-house," somebody said. "Why cannot that be made available as the central idea, or the motive, of a substantial country house? It certainly can have as much individuality given to it as a picture painted by a genuine artist." On this hint I spake, having abode in many log-cabins (of one of which I have given the reader of *THE ART AMATEUR* a picture), and having helped to build the same. Possibly, under the skilful handling of some of my readers, these sketchy observations may, some day, take shape in the building of a comfortable and unique summer home.

Primitive American architecture, as adopted by our own people, and without any admixture of European notions, is best illustrated, probably, in the "dugout" of the Western wilds. The North American Indian, skilled in the chase, made his shelter of the skins of animals, stretched on poles. His immediate successor, a man of many cares and few diversions, found time only for

the digging of a burrow in the side of a hill. Living often in a treeless region, the Western settler has no timber for building purposes, and scarcely even wood for fuel. The "dugout" is excavated to

usually the simple needs of the tenants are met by the burrowing out of one large room. The wooden and sodded structure which opens to the inner life of the inhabitants may be big enough to be used as a living-room, and its single window admits all the light required by the inmates. As snug and warm as marmots in a burrow, the settler and his children here abide until better fortunes give them a more pretentious dwelling, or a restless spirit of adventure and exploration impels them to move farther westward. The rude shelter which I have described is said to be comfortable, and, although it is not very picturesque, it is not a blot on the landscape. It is an unobtrusive bit of domestic architecture, and being covered, according to Ruskin's recommendation, with the hue of the soil nearest it, it certainly fits into the nakedness of the picture without a discordant note.

Next to the "dugout" in point of elaborateness, and antedating it in point of invention, is the log-cabin—the American type of civilized man's habitation. Although Viollet-Le-Duc, in his "Habitations of Man in all Ages," conducts his companions through the dwellings of the Toltecs and the Nahuas, he gives us no glimpse of the Indian wigwam, the "dugout," or the log-cabin of Northern America. The nearest approach to the latter form of structure, as figured by the ingenious Frenchman in his pages, is found in the house of the Aryas settled on the Upper Indus. The gable-framing of those dwellings is precisely like that of the Western log-cabin. It is of unhewn timbers, raised on a lower structure of rough-hewn stone.

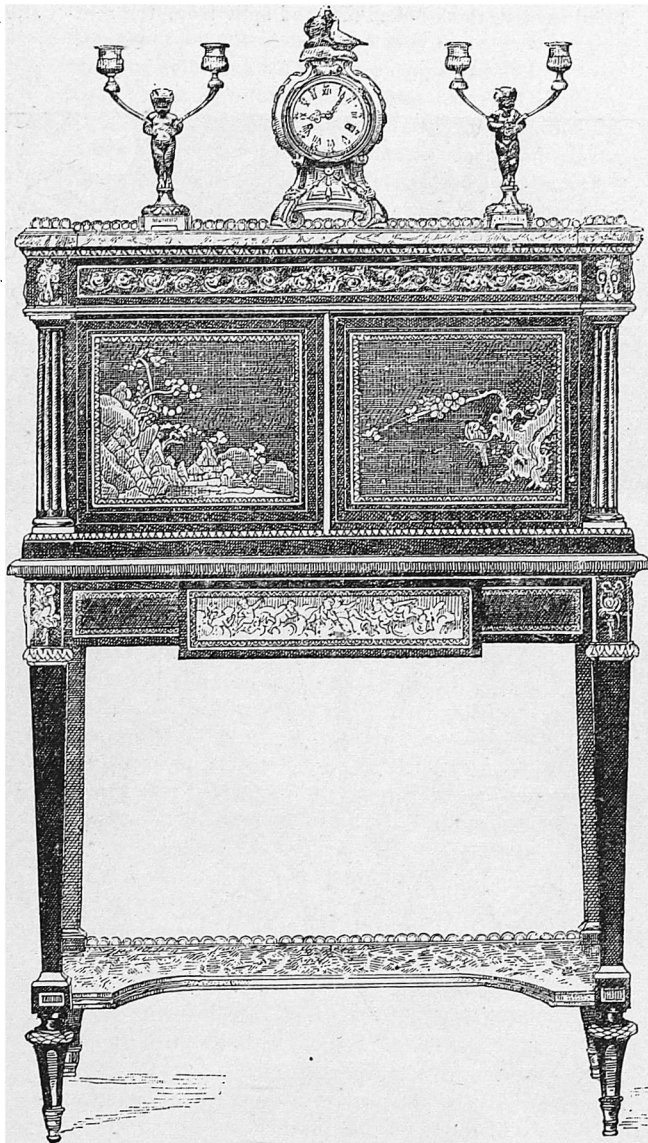
The log-cabin can only be readily built in timbered regions. When the builder is pushed by sharp needs, or is too indolent to bestow great pains on his work, he leaves the logs of his house in their native covering. Selecting the required number of shapely logs, these are cut to the proper length. It is not usual to piece out the length or breadth of a house by splicing the logs, and the size of the building is consequently determinable by the height of the trees employed, as well as by the

needs of the builder. In the language of the log-cabin building country, the cabin is "eight logs high" or "ten logs high," as the number of timbers used in the work may indicate. A good size for an

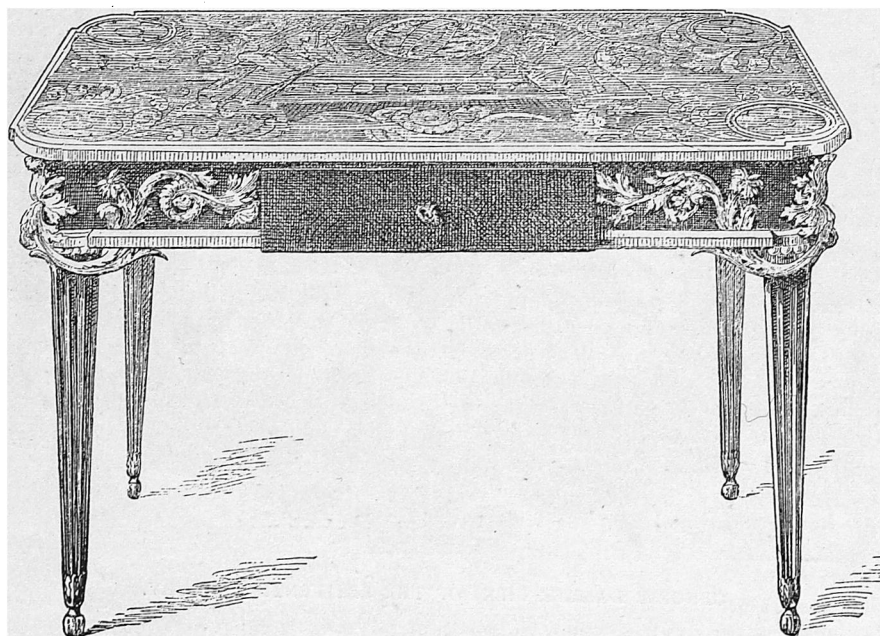
ordinary log-cabin suitable for a small family is that of an actual habitation, built in Western Kansas, during the days of the border war, and dwelt in by five men. That building was about seventeen feet wide and twenty-two feet long. It was constructed of hewn timber, and the only sawed lumber used in the work was that which entered into the frames of the windows, the door-jambs and sashes.

The floor was made of "punchcons," or slabs of hard wood split from logs previously cut to the right length by a whip-saw. These punchcons were two or three inches thick and were smoothed fairly with an adze. They were laid loosely, but as compactly as possible, on the floor-beams, and were not pinned or fastened to the supporting sills beneath. Even the door was of "shakes" split from pine and cedar logs in thin flakes, so to speak, and nailed to a slight frame-work, each strip overlapping the other, after the

fashion of clapboarding. The chimney was built of friable stone laid in clay, and it came down within only to the level of the eaves of the cabin, where shakes, supported by poles laid from side to side of the topmost logs, furnished a slight flooring. Even



BONHEUR DU JOUR IN LOUIS SEIZE STYLE. BY DASSON.



LOUIS SEIZE MARQUETRY INLAID TABLE. BY RIESENER AND GOUTHIÈRE.

covered by a slightly raised roof, and the whole is usually daubed with clay and then again covered with thick sods cut from the virgin surface of the prairie.

The "dugout" may be big enough to admit of partitioning the interior into several apartments, but

the latch of the door was a bolt of hard maple fastened at one end by a large rivet on which it played readily, while the other end fell into a wooden catch and a leathern thong, made fast to the outer end of the bolt and passing through a hole above, hung out to notify the visitor that the inmates were at home since their "latch-string was out."

As will be seen, the building of a log-cabin is a very simple undertaking. Nevertheless, there is as wide a difference among log-cabin builders as among the builders of palaces and "palatial mansions." The most picturesque and thoroughly artistic log-cabin I ever saw was built on the Republican Fork of the Kaw by an ignorant and untaught Arkansan, who with great diffidence admitted that he had never seen one like it, and that it was "built out of his own head." An indescribable charm invested the humble dwelling. It was a part of a very beautiful landscape in which a magnificent forest of cottonwoods and sycamores and a bold bluff ridge beyond furnished the background. And yet four miles down the stream was another cabin, built by a son of New England, a man of some little education, and which was as ugly as the hand of man could make it.

The adaptability of the American log-cabin to the requirements of a family living in the country, especially if the place of habitation is far from any considerable village, must be apparent to any one who has studied the structure. Five young fellows, having the logs on the ground, cut and framed them, raised the edifice before mentioned to the ridge-pole, cut the openings for the door and windows, and laid the floor, all in one week's time. Nothing can be ruder or more elementary than a log-house. Having laid the sills of the house, notches are cut in the next

layer of logs in such a way that the notched end of each fits neatly into the cut of the log beneath. The familiar "cob house," reared by country children at play, is the model of the log-cabin. The logs, however, cannot be brought so closely together but there will remain gaping interstices between. These are filled in with thick flakes of wood split from the rem-

ceive them, from one side of the cabin to the other. These are the floor timbers. In case it is intended to give an upper story to the house, these floor timbers are tolerably massive and are framed into the side-logs at any desired altitude from the ground, and the work is carried on above until the walls of the attic story are completed and the roof is ready to be

covered in. The gables are formed precisely in the same manner as the side-walls, except that the rafters are dovetailed, so to speak, into the timbers of the gables, the ends of the rafters being inserted betwixt the ends of the gable logs. Then, the height of both gables being reached, the two are bound together by the ridge-pole, and the work is ready for covering with the split shakes or shingles which are to keep the house dry within.

Where the material is readily obtainable, it is usual to build a big stone chimney outside of the house, and at one end, the face of the lower portion being advanced into the structure, furnishing a fireplace as ample as the will of the builder may determine. Of a cold day, whatever the season, the generous fireplace yawns with a glowing fire, and the flames leap up to welcome the chance visitor and to cheer the home. It often happens, however, that the settler has great ado to find any material save wood for his chimney. In such a case he builds with light sticks, on



GENOESE DAMASK SILK, OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

nants of the building material. Any fibre easily attainable may be used in completing this process, which is known as "chinking." And when this is done, plaster, or clay, or any other kind of cement, is daubed on thickly with a trowel.

The logs being raised on top of each other until the required height of the structure is reached, poles are laid across the upper logs, previously notched to re-

the model of his house, a chimney which, if properly protected by thickly-daubed clay, is incombustible and is good enough for ordinary purposes. The stick chimney is usually built up from a foundation of gravel-stones, such as even a prairie country will furnish if one digs for them, and the fireplace, although not generous in its amplitude, suggests comfort and convenience. I have given here the rudest outlines of

a log-cabin as built in the Western wilderness. It will be seen that the structure is simplicity itself. Even the doors and windows are not built into the house but are cut out after the logs are laid up, often not determined upon as to number and location until the structure is otherwise nearly completed. The main idea of the house, as here suggested, is capable of almost indefinite expansion. The original cabin may be made the nucleus of an aggregation of structures, all forming one habitation. A favorite plan of log-cabin building often met with in Missouri and Southern Kansas gives two small cabins, wholly detached from each other except that they are covered by one roof. The open space between these furnishes a shelter from the sun and rain, and is usually, in fine weather, the lounging-place of the inmates. It is common, too, to find a detached cabin built for a cook-house, and perhaps the sleeping apartments of the family are in still another building joined to the central house by a lighter bit of log work, duly chinked and plastered or "daubed."

In case the main or central cabin is large enough to admit of sub-divisions, partitions are commonly made, it must be confessed, of sheets of cotton cloth stretched on a framework, or "furring" of split joists. I have seen these partitions, however, covered with fine split shakes wrought out almost as thin as the heavy paper used for lining carpets. When accessible, tongued and grooved inch-stuff makes a good material for partitions, and in no case, of course, should it be painted or stained. The openings may be masked with drapery of some sort, the most effective that I have ever seen being made of bur-laps hanging in thick folds

and very sparingly touched with a bright embroidery.

The details of an interior arrangement may be safely left to the taste and skill of the daring innovator who proposes to build for himself a log country house on "the American plan." I saw on the old wagon-road from Grasshopper Falls to Leavenworth, Kansas, many years before the rage for æsthetic house-building had begun to devastate the country, a house of hewn logs, chinked within and without with the yellow clay of the region, the pine timber slightly toned down in color by time and the weather, furnished in excellent taste with unpainted splint-bottomed chairs, home-made oaken tables, and cotton-wood bedsteads, and decorated with unconscious skill. Severe critics might object to the brilliant bit of color hanging in the window in the shape of a curtain of Turkey red. But even this did not disturb the harmony of the mellow tones of the timbered walls, the unpainted ceiling resting on unpeeled poles, and the spotless oaken floor. A huge fireplace, its jambs and lintel being each one massive rough-hewn block of stone, held a cheerful fire. An opening into a dormitory lately added to the house was screened by a portière, as I suppose it would now be called, made of grain-sacks ripped apart and sewn together again

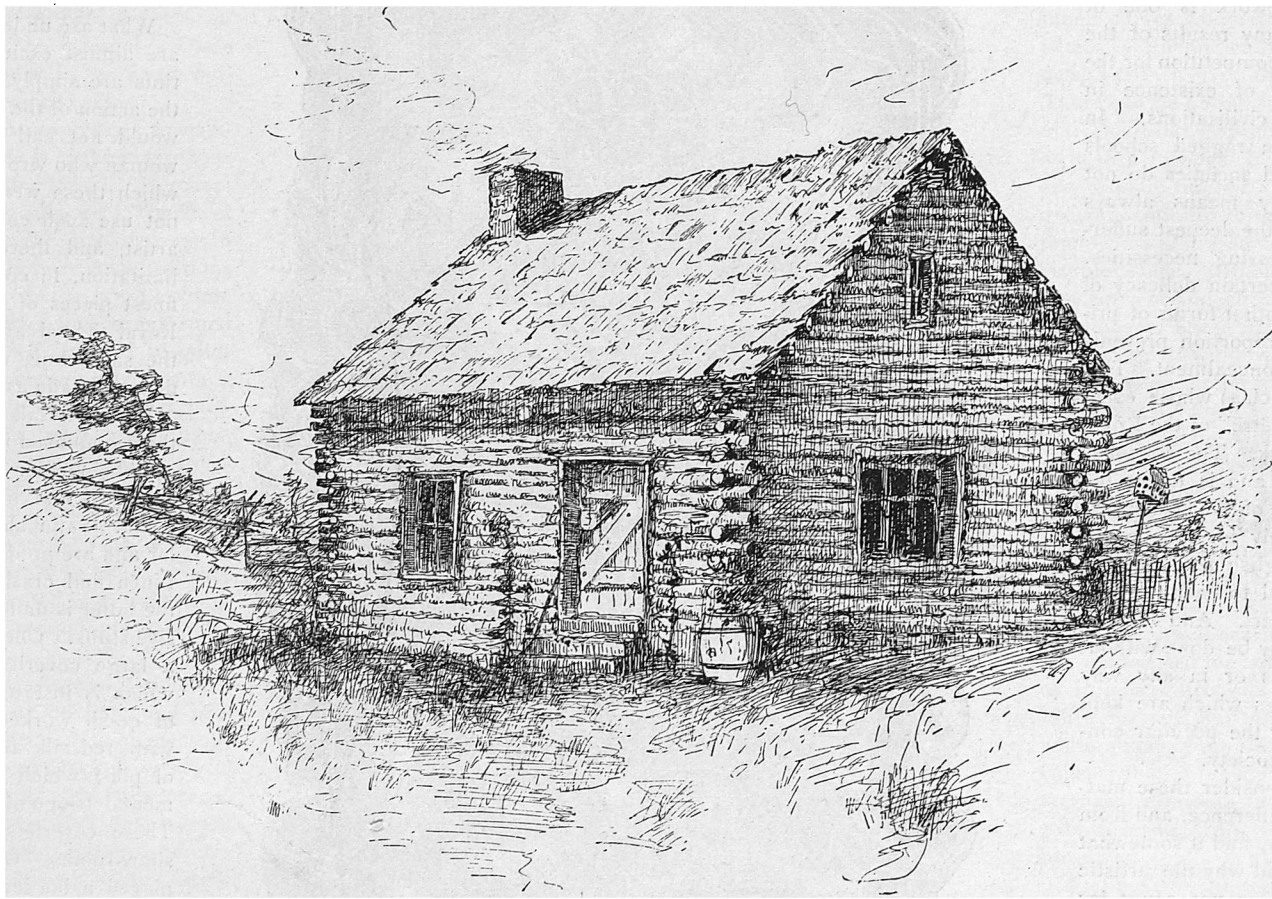
in one sheet and enlivened with a cross-stitching of red crewel where the seams were made. The cook-house was detached from the main building and was, in fact, the ruder log-cabin in which the family had lived during their less prosperous days and had now deserted for the more pretentious timber house.

It is easy to see the capabilities of a house like this. The cabin of hewn logs is vastly more comfortable than the primitive habitation of unpeeled and unhewn logs. It is more easily kept free from prowling insects, rats and mice and such small deer; and the interior effect is far more cheerful than that of the cabin whose dark-skinned walls are somewhat sombre unless valuable space is sacrificed to window openings. Such a timber house as that here indicated was exhibited by the Swedish Government at the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876, and was subsequently transferred to the Central Park where it now stands a refuge for the bats and owls, in an unfrequented part of that pleasure-ground.

But the cabin of logs left with their richly-tinted bark still on them is the more picturesque object in the landscape. Seen from a distance, exaggerated by the deceitful mirage of the prairie, the log-cabin often assumes the proportions and outlines of a castle, ex-

porary life goes on at their very elbows, all unnoticed? I have had a good dip into Italy in my time, and I am sure that with Thompson Street at hand there is no need of having models in the Piazza di Spagna. Where will you see better Italians, if it be Italians you are after, than you will find here? Look at them: combing one another's hair in doorways, and such hair! Or chattering, chaffing, and gesticulating around fish-carts or vegetable wagons! Or standing, three in a group, neat as wax, all dressed in calico, waist and skirt of different color and pattern, innocent of hoops, each with a clean white apron, each with her hair coiled round her head in fine braids, well oiled, and looking like a pretty beehive, and each holding a small baby as clean as herself! Or, if you will study children, here they are in rich variety! Luca della Robbia cherubs, or those of Perugino's making, quintessence of innocence, angelic honey of swift, soft Italian vowels rolling off their lips, as they discuss the merits of a far-gone banana! Or, rushing round the corner, his scapulary whizzing in the air, his thick curls dancing in the wind he makes, his bold black eyes flashing with demon glee, the incipient brigand of seven, pursued by the screaming owner of the protoplasmic hat he

flourishes about his head! Or, sitting in a doorway, her thin legs bare, her slim body tracing its outline through her poor frock, her thin but pretty fingers playing with an artificial flower, outcast finery snatched from an ash-barrel, a little girl of ten, with a sweet oval face, lips of a wan rose, eyes of soft blue, her delicate ears spoiled with gold earrings, and her thick hair drawn up on the top of her head and fastened with a piece



THE TYPICAL AMERICAN HOUSE.

cept that its low-pitched roof suggests the chalet rather than turret and tower. Its color harmonizes with the hue of the surroundings, and when half-concealed with climbing vines, or half-hidden among the thickets bordering creek or forest, the log-cabin not only fits into the picture admirably, but it piques the curiosity and the interest of the wayfarer who beholds from afar what seems to be a haven of rest, a home of comfort and honest industry, a primitive habitation inviting inspection and imitation.

NOAH BROOKS.

ART IN THE SLUMS.

THIS summer, for the first time in many years, I found myself obliged to spend the pleasantest weeks of the season in the city; and so closely was I confined to my work that when it was over for the day I had to be content with what amusement I could get out of the homely quarter where I live. I had to find it in my own way. I sought it in the slums, and I used to come back from my rambles with one thought, and that is: Where are our artists, and what are they doing while all this picturesque contem-

porary life goes on at their very elbows, all unnoticed? I have had a good dip into Italy in my time, and I am sure that with Thompson Street at hand there is no need of having models in the Piazza di Spagna. Where will you see better Italians, if it be Italians you are after, than you will find here? Look at them: combing one another's hair in doorways, and such hair! Or chattering, chaffing, and gesticulating around fish-carts or vegetable wagons! Or standing, three in a group, neat as wax, all dressed in calico, waist and skirt of different color and pattern, innocent of hoops, each with a clean white apron, each with her hair coiled round her head in fine braids, well oiled, and looking like a pretty beehive, and each holding a small baby as clean as herself! Or, if you will study children, here they are in rich variety! Luca della Robbia cherubs, or those of Perugino's making, quintessence of innocence, angelic honey of swift, soft Italian vowels rolling off their lips, as they discuss the merits of a far-gone banana! Or, rushing round the corner, his scapulary whizzing in the air, his thick curls dancing in the wind he makes, his bold black eyes flashing with demon glee, the incipient brigand of seven, pursued by the screaming owner of the protoplasmic hat he

of twine—do you think that Ingres would have passed such a subject by? Or Raphael, who, the old story said, stopped at just such a sight as he walked in the Roman streets to draw a peasant woman and her children on the head of a cask. These are my Italians, but the negroes are better subjects for the sketch-book, being native here, and to the manor born—however we may read our Shakespeare! This corner of THE ART AMATEUR allowed me leaves room for only one picture—that of a handsome couple, as free of the world and as careless of the eyes of creeping or crawling things as Adam and Eve in the Garden, who come down the opposite sidewalk swinging their hands locked by the little finger; he talking nonsense in her ear, she laughing with splendid teeth and rich eyes, and with her left hand swinging a pine-apple round her shoulder, held by its green crown. Or, if not Adam and Eve, then Paul and Virginia, with Sullivan Street for Martinique! What hired models, in borrowed clothes and affected attitudes, could give an artist such hints as these—and the city is full of them—and yet they are as utterly neglected as if they did not exist! Some day will come an artist who will make a name by the use to which he will put this rich mine.

C. C.